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Arizona Daily Star

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 | tucson.com

Bill takes on home affordability



ROSS D. FRANKLIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS, FILE 2025

A bill to address housing affordability in Arizona would block cities and towns from requiring everything from garages, paved driveways, backyard patios or fencing for new homes.

Advocates address high prices for single-family homes in Arizona

BOB CHRISTIE
 Capitol Media Services

PHOENIX — They're either more affordable homes, or they're junk houses. That's the basic breakdown of a proposal awaiting a vote in the Arizona House after barely passing the Senate that would upend decades of municipal design standards builders are required to follow to develop new housing tracts across the state.

The proposal is the latest effort by builders and housing advocates on both sides of the political aisle to address high housing prices for single-family homes.

They do it by blocking cities and towns from requiring everything from garages, paved driveways, backyard patios or fencing between new homes or even main streets. Also barred are any city or town standards that require specific

exterior designs, exterior lighting, roofing pitches or floorplans or exterior color requirements.

Also gone would be requirements for developers to put in neighborhood parks or anything like common areas or landscaping that would require a homeowner's association and the fees required to maintain it.

Without those current rules, proponents argue, home buyers currently locked out of the market by average new home prices nearing \$500,000 could see new and cheaper choices.

Opponents argue cities are best suited to making decisions on zoning, standards for new home development and neighborhood character, and that blocking their longstanding rules for new homes

Please see **HOMES**, Page A4

Doubts shadow US-Iran talks

MUNIR AHMED, JON GAMBRELL AND DAVID RISING
 Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan moved ahead Monday with preparations for a new round of talks between the United States and Iran two days before a tenuous ceasefire is set to expire, even as renewed conflict around the Strait of Hormuz raised questions about whether the meeting would take place.

Over the weekend, the U.S. attacked and seized an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel that it said had tried to evade its blockade of Iranian ports. Iran's joint military command vowed to respond, and its Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his Pakistani counterpart that American threats to Iranian ships and ports were "clear signs" of Washington's disingenuousness ahead of the planned talks, Iran state media reported.

Please see **IRAN**, Page A2

Many wildfire survivors may face new blow

GABRIELA AOUN ANGUIERA
 Associated Press

Thousands of survivors of the 2025 Eaton Fire in Altadena, California, have elected to accept an upfront settlement from the utility accused of causing it, forgoing future litigation for a faster payment that could help them rebuild or relocate.

But unless a bill moving through Congress becomes law, that money could be taxed as income, taking big bites out of their payments and possibly disqualifying them from other government benefits.

"There was this terrifying disbelief," Bree Jensen, communications director for the Eaton Fire Long-Term Recovery Group, said of informing fellow residents about the tax.

Thousands more who are suing the utility face the same prospect, as well as fire survivors in Colorado, Hawaii and Oregon, after a tax exemption on wildfire-related compensation expired at the end of 2025.

In recent years, Congress has shielded wildfire settlements from taxes, but legislation to do so was short-lived and a struggle to pass, leaving gaps between laws that risk saddling some survivors with a possible tax burden on their compensation. A bipartisan House bill to extend the tax relief passed out of committee last month, but the timeline for bringing it to a floor vote and when the Senate will take action are unknown, leaving survivors in financial limbo.

"We have to assume we don't have that money, so we're making decisions,

Please see **FIRES**, Page A6

Deployed Guardsmen still roaming nation's capital

GARY FIELDS
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The cherry blossoms draw more than a million visitors to Washington's Tidal Basin annually. This year was no different, except some strolling the area between the Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial were dressed in camouflage — and armed. Eight months after President

Donald Trump declared a crime emergency in the nation's capital and called up the National Guard, more than 2,500 troops remain, in a deployment that has grown increasingly routine, with no clear end in sight.

Deployments to other cities have ended or been paused by courts in California and Illinois, while more limited

Please see **GUARDSMEN**, Page A4



JACQUELYN MARTIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Members of the Florida National Guard pass by tourists on a sidewalk in Washington.

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